



UTAH SYSTEM OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION

# MEMORANDUM

March 24, 2023

## Academic Education Committee Report

The Academic Education Committee met on February 17, 2023, under the leadership of Committee Chair Stan Albrecht.

### **Institutional Roles and Missions Task Force Report**

Board Member Hope Eccles reported on the work of the Institutional Roles and Missions Task Force, which has been examining the current policies that touch on various parts of institutional roles and missions with an eye to consolidating, clarifying, and updating them. The updates will include incorporating the technical colleges into the definitions of role categories and individual institutional missions and clarify geographic service regions and which institution is responsible for different post-secondary education levels within those regions. It will also address how to better serve underserved populations across the state and focus more on addressing institutional quality within a defined role and mission. The task force has looked into policies R310, R312, and R315 and drafted a tentative update shared with members of the Academic Education Committee for approval of their general direction. Further revisions are underway with an ambitious goal to have drafts of new policies ready for review and vetting by presidents, appropriate constituent groups, and the Academic and Technical Committees in time for review and approval by the full Board in June of 2023.

### **College Affordability**

Although the Academic Education Committee does not have specific affordability tactics assigned to it on the Board's Strategic Plan, several of the Committee's tactics directly impact college affordability. Those tactics were discussed during the February meeting and include:

- Credit for Prior Learning policies that have allowed students to earn credit in courses for knowledge and skills gained in advanced high school coursework, the military, employment, or other situations. The Credit for Prior Learning initiatives saved students \$94 million in tuition in Academic Year 2022.
- The Concurrent Enrollment enrollment program, which helped students save \$77.7 million in tuition in Academic Year 2022.
- Co-requisite models and alternate placement measures, which save students time and money by placing them directly into college-level coursework with built-in remediation support rather than requiring them to go through remedial coursework.
- The Introductory Course Success initiatives, which are measuring and addressing course success equity gaps in introductory courses. Not failing courses can help students avoid the extra cost and

time of repeating courses. It also helps them avoid losing Federal Financial Aid, scholarships, or grants for not making "satisfactory academic progress."

### **Research Pillar for the Strategic Plan**

The Committee started developing the research pillar of the Board's Strategic Plan, in discussion with institutional presidents, chief academic officers, and the research vice presidents at the University of Utah and Utah State University. The system has two "R1" or highest national level of doctoral-granting research institutions, the University of Utah and Utah State University; however, faculty and students at all degree-granting institutions are expected to engage in some level of research, creation of knowledge, or scholarly activity. The differing expectations for research based on institutional role will be reflected in Board policy updates.

Research efforts at the degree-granting institutions have an enormous impact on the economy of the state of Utah and local communities. It also affects the quality of life through research on the state's critical problems, like air pollution, water, technology transfers, family and social issues, etc. One of the tactics for the Board to develop will be plans for measuring and reporting the economic, social, and cultural impact of research at the degree-granting institutions. The Committee also discussed the importance of graduate programs in supporting the work of institutions, developing Utah's workforce, and furthering critical research agendas. It recognized that participation in research should be an important part of degree-seeking students' educational progress, not just in graduate work but also within undergraduate programs. Students who participate in faculty-mentored, intensive undergraduate research projects graduate in 4.29 years and at 20% higher rates than those who do not. Helping students access those opportunities will be crucial for addressing completion within the system. The Committee will continue these discussions in future meetings to flesh out this strategy before the June Committee of the Whole.

### **Action Items forwarded from the Committee**

The Committee reviewed the annual report on Credit for Prior Learning earned at each degree-granting institution, as required by Utah Code 53B-16-107. It is forwarding it to the full Board for approval on the General Consent Calendar. Of particular note, in addition to the tuition saved through credit for prior learning, are the number of students served and the number of credits earned: 31,573 degree-seeking students earned more than 227,958 credits towards their degrees through prior learning assessments.

### **Strategic Plan Deliverables**

The Committee is also forwarding a bi-monthly update on its strategic plan progress and the deliverables it plans to complete in 2023 in the memo attachment.

### **Commissioner's Recommendation**

The Commissioner recommends the Board approve the Annual Report on Credit for Prior Learning, as required by Utah Code 53B-16-107. The Report is in the General Consent Calendar.

### **Attachment**